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Health and Wellness

2010 Freedom Cruise: Taking Home Dialysis to Sea

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Palm Bay resident Ken Fleming, now 61, was just 52 years old when he was diagnosed with a rare kidney disease and informed that his kidneys would eventually stop working. In 2006, he was diagnosed with End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD), requiring him to undergo dialysis treatments to survive.



Most patients receive conventional dialysis treatments in a center, three to four times each week for three to four hours each session. Ken learned about another option from his nephrologist: the NxStage System One, which allows him to do treatments himself when and where he wants to. The portable machine is the size of a 13-inch television, doesn't require special water hook-ups and is powered by a standard electrical outlet. Ken does dialysis with his trained partner and wife, Catherine, on a more frequent basis, which allows the machine to act more like a functioning kidney. These home treatments are gentler on Ken's body, resulting in increased energy levels and the ability to live a more active lifestyle.

For Ken, the most important part of being able to dialyze on his own is the freedom he has been afforded, particularly to travel. He and Catherine are able to split their time between homes in Glen Falls, New York and Palm Bay, Florida, and enjoy traveling with their children and eight grandchildren.

The couple will be doing something they haven't done since Ken started dialysis -- embarking on cruise. The cruise, dubbed the "2010 Freedom Cruise: We're Taking Home Dialysis to Sea," departs from Miami on January 3, 2010 and returns on January 10. In the years that the NxStage System One has been available, numerous patients have, with the approval of their doctor and center, taken cruises with their NxStage systems, but this is the first known large group, patient-organized cruise by home hemodialysis patients using the NxStage System One.

NxStage Medical is not sponsoring or organizing the cruise but is supporting the shipment of supplies to the Miami port for participants. More information about the cruise can be found at www.billpeckham.com/cruise/2010-freedom-cruise-information-central.html or on NxStage's website at www.nxstage.com/FreedomCruise.